

National Congress Bulletin

NATIONAL CONGRESS OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS
1201 Sixteenth Street, N. W., Washington, D. C.



OCTOBER, 1938

NATIONAL BOARD VOTES NEW SERVICE TO LOCAL UNITS

METHODS of strengthening local parent-teacher work throughout the nation were discussed at the fall meeting of the Board of Managers of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers in Washington, D. C., September 14-16. The meeting brought together 75 members of the Board, including 12 national officers, 21 national committee chairmen, and presidents of 42 state branches.

Action of the Board most immediately and directly affecting local parent-teacher associations was the unanimous decision to establish a new service from the National Congress to its local units, whereby the *National Congress Bulletin* will go monthly to the president of every local Congress unit.* The content of the *Bulletin* will be addressed to local units, instead of to state board members as has hitherto been the policy.

Highlights of National Chairmen's Reports

ART Art in every phase of education has moved forward with remarkable force. There is more and better art today than ever before, although many rural areas still need help. There are more art chairmen in parent-teacher associations, which means there will be more general arts in units throughout the country.

EXCEPTIONAL CHILD It is the plan of the national committee to encourage more adequate state effort for both handicapped

and gifted children, and to urge local units as well as state branches to study the problems of exceptional children in their particular areas.

HUMANE EDUCATION Exceptionally fine work is being done in humane education. The effort to build the simple principle of kindness in human hearts is little understood by many, and yet, according to Dr. Don D. Tullis, "It is time to try kindness—the world needs it. It is an antidote for fear and hatred."

LEGISLATION The Federal Food, Drugs, and Cosmetics Act, for which the National Congress had long worked, was enacted into law on June 25, 1938. The Neely Motion Picture Bill passed the U. S. Senate on May 17, but did not pass the House at the last session. This bill will require renewed effort on the part of parent-teacher members when Congress convenes in January.

LIBRARY SERVICE In America, one-third of the people have good library service; one-third have only limited service; and one-third have no public library service near at hand. Book-automobile projects are providing much-needed library service to rural people, and parent-teacher associations are cooperating in extending this service. The United States Congress will consider appropriations for rural library service at its next session.

● NEW NATIONAL CHAIRMEN ●

New chairmen of national committees were elected by the National Board as follows:

Membership—Mrs. J. W. Snyder
Fargo, North Dakota

Program Service—
Mrs. J. W. Bingham
Palo Alto, California

MENTAL HYGIENE

One of the main concerns of mental hygiene endeavor in local parent-teacher associations is the promotion of understanding how the incorporation of the principles of mental hygiene may affect education. It is hoped that concrete results may eventually be attained in the establishment of child guidance clinics, juvenile courts, family and marriage consultation bureaus, visiting teachers' programs, and other agencies working for the understanding of human nature, personality development, and human relationships.

SOCIAL HYGIENE

A complete social hygiene program should have four parts: legislation, medication, protection, and education. A program of social hygiene education can well be fitted into the work of other parent-teacher committees, such as health, character, recreation, homemaking, and library service. Social hygiene programs should be kept simple; it is an intimate subject and the home is still the best place for it.

SUMMER ROUND-UP OF THE CHILDREN

Parents are indicating a growing desire to widen the scope of the Summer Round-Up to include children who are of ages above and below the age level now included in the Round-Up.

(Continued on page 3)

● PARENT-TEACHER RADIO FORUM ●

Plans for the 1938-39 Parent-Teacher Radio Forum, which will present a new type of program, are nearing completion.

The program will be presented by the National Congress of Parents and Teachers in cooperation with the U. S. Office of Education, with the assistance of the Works Progress Administration. The National Broadcasting Company again makes its facilities available.

Definite announcement will be made soon concerning the time and the N.B.C. network over which the broadcasts will be heard.

*The *Bulletin* will be available to other subscribers at the subscription price of 20c a year.



Signposts and Guides

INTERPRETING THE GUIDING

PRINCIPLES OF PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS

"TO bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the training of the child."

—THE OBJECTS

Adequate educational opportunity for every child and adult is a basic necessity in a democracy where the people are responsible for their standards of living and the kind of government they have. Thus education is the concern of us all.

The Objects of parent-teacher associations reveal that these organizations exist, nearly 27,000 of them, to provide an organized opportunity for parents and teachers to promote the education and well-being of children and youth in the total environment in which they live—in the home, the school, the church, and the community; and to fit themselves for this responsibility. The quotation from the Objects, given above, gives special emphasis to the importance of cooperative relationships between the home and the school, as a means of accomplishing these objects.

How We Get Together

● *The parents' point of view* as a factor in determining educational policies was emphasized in two cartoons which were published in an educational journal. In the first cartoon a school superintendent, seated alone at his desk with courses of study piled high, is saying, "I am planning my course of study." In the second cartoon, another superintendent, surrounded by a conference group including school principals, classroom teachers, supervisors, school board members, and parents is saying, "*We* are planning our course of study."

● *A report from a local unit* included this statement: "You will notice that we make no separate mention of our teachers. This is because we all work together as members of the P.T.A. with no consciousness of special interests or of separate groups."

● *The class night program* of a Mid-western highschool announced on the outside cover: "We want you to know that this program could not have been given without the aid of our highschool P.T.A. They planned the costuming and are working with us backstage this evening."

Visiting the School

● *Preparation* for intelligent visiting of the school by parents may be planned

early in the year, by having the principal give a talk at the P.T.A. on the ideals, methods, and philosophy of the school, and the why and how of school visiting. This will insure maximum value to the visitor, and will prevent any inconvenience to the teacher or children.

● *Suggestions on school visiting* will vary in different types of schools. The following were prepared jointly by the parents and teachers of one school:

1. Go to the principal's office on arrival at the school. A student usher will show you the building, and will conduct you to the classroom you desire to visit.

2. Enter the classroom without being announced, and take a seat in the back of the room, with only a nod of greeting to the teacher or your child. This prevents interruption of the class activity.

3. A classroom host will provide you with the textbook or any material you will need in order to follow the subject of the hour understandingly.

4. A quiet, listening attitude will help both teacher and children to continue their work without being unduly conscious of the presence of a visitor.

5. If you desire to talk with the teacher, do so after school or by appointment, avoiding interruption of school routine.

● *Another way of knowing your schools:* plan a year's program on this subject. The program might include such topics as: (a) the course of study, (b) building, equipment, and grounds, (c) extracurricular activities, (d) school problems and needs, (e) how the school trains for citizenship, (f) the vocational guidance program. Open House, or Back to School Night, when parents may see the school in operation, is an annual affair in many schools.

● *Visits to the home by the teachers* promote mutual understanding and cooperation between parents and teachers and better adjustment of the child. Through the sympathetic relationship established during an informal friendly visit in the home, the ideals and purposes of the school may be explained, and problems of attendance, punctuality, grades, conduct, and attitude may be completely solved.

American Education Week November 6-12, 1938

American Education Week is observed annually in November by public schools throughout this country.

The purpose of American Education Week is described as follows: "To put children first; to attach importance to the school as an instrument for the improvement of our democratic way of life; to deepen the interest of parents in their children and in the schools; to quicken the educational consciousness of the community; to emphasize the part education must play in a new social-economic advance; to unite all the forces of the community in a common effort to improve the schools—such are the aims of American Education Week. Let every teacher and every layman do his part to make this week a period of great national revival; a period of rededication marked by a strong purpose to go forward to better things."

Members of P.T.A.'s are urged to visit the schools in which they are most interested during the week beginning November 6, and to reinterpret in the light of the present situation, how parents and teachers, working together, may promote adequate educational opportunity for every boy and girl in this country.

HOW TO USE CONGRESS PUBLICATIONS

This is the title of an attractive 8-page descriptive folder which illustrates methods and types of displays; calls attention through picture and description to materials for use in planning the year's work; suggests materials of interest to the individual member; lists references of value in building a year's program; and offers suggestions for selecting a Parent-Teacher Bookshelf. This folder is available from each state office. Write for your copy.

AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK

A plateprint announcement on American Education Week, which gives suggested activities for parent-teacher associations, may be obtained from each state office.

Parent-Teacher News



Membership Participation Stressed

"USE them or lose them" seems to be the unofficial slogan of membership and program committee in their approach to members this fall—never before has there been such widespread effort to enlist all members in active participation in parent-teacher activities.

A number of ingenious devices for increasing membership and stimulating member participation in local units have been reported recently.

One unit divided the school district into four sections, each headed by a chairman who acted as hostess at tea for prospective members of the association. Each new member was asked to fill in a card stating his special interests and every member was invited to assist with some specific activity of the association. This file of information concerning the interests of members was found to be most helpful to the program committee in affording every member an opportunity for an active part in association work.

MRS. JENNIE R. NICHOLS

Mrs. Jennie Roe Nichols, of Tacoma, Washington, Humane Education chairman of the National Congress since 1921, passed away on September 21, after an illness of several weeks. Her generosity of spirit, her humor, her friendliness, her love of all life have been woven into parent-teacher fabric over a period of thirty-three years. Many lives are the richer for having known her fine, brave spirit.

Membership Enrolment

HERE are suggestions from many sources concerning membership enrolment in local units:

Emphasis must be placed upon the facts that a thorough understanding of the parent-teacher movement is basic, that membership workers must be true interpreters of the movement, and that attendance and participation throughout the year are the real tests of the quality of the membership work done.

As to techniques — conferences for the training of membership workers, a well planned enrolment, and personal contact with new and old members are the desirable methods of procedure.

Suggestions for membership slogans:

P.T.A. Membership Week—Have You Re-Membered?

P.T.A. Equals Parent Power Plus Teacher Power

P.T.A. Needs You—Join Today Remember to Re-Member

Men Members

TO stimulate greater interest and participation on the part of men members, one association reports the following plan: (1) Meetings are held at night in order that men members may attend; (2) Men, as well as women, are elected to office; (3) Men are appointed to committees of special interest to them; (4) Men, as well as women, are members of study groups; (5) Men members assume complete responsibility for occasional meetings.

Examination for Parents

A rating scale to aid parents in determining for themselves whether or not they are adequately meeting their responsibilities to their children was distributed by a local unit. The rating scale stated objectively some of the aims of the P.T.A. "If you can pass this examination with a score of 75, the P.T.A. needs you," read the announcement, "and if your score is below 50, you need the P.T.A."

Typical questions: "Does your child get regular meals and a balanced diet? Do you give your child some responsibility? Do you provide your child with adequate play time and equipment? Are you teaching your child to appreciate the opinions and customs of other people?"

Rural Festivals

COMMUNITY festivals in dramatics, music, and folk games are carried on by many rural parent-teacher associations. This cultural arts program has as its purpose the development of talent, the providing of wholesome fun, the stimulation of good programs in recreation and entertainment, as well as its educational value. One-act plays and short pageants are used in the dramatic phase of the festival. Music activities consist of small vocal groups, instrumental groups, verse speaking choirs, square dance sets, and folk game groups. The numbers are non-competitive and are planned to replace contests and tournaments held previously.

Highlights of Chairmen's Reports

(Continued from page 1)

STUDENT AID Hundreds of young people have been helped to continue their education through the work of student aid committees. Each state should help her own boys and girls either locally or through a state fund. Some states are receiving help from the National Youth Administration.

PARENT-TEACHER METHODS

"I'm a new president and don't know a thing."

"How can we make the slogan 'Once a member, always a member' apply to our P.T.A.?"

"What questions should our bylaws answer?"

"Does a local association need a publications chairman?"

"What is the new plan for the promotion of the Magazine?"

"Why is local publicity important?"

"How can parent-teacher procedures and programs be adapted to open country conditions?"

These and other questions concerning parent-teacher methods were discussed at length in clinic conferences at the Salt Lake City Convention. To make the findings of these conferences available to a large group, the 32-page report has been released as a 10c pamphlet entitled, *Parent-Teacher Methods*. Order your copy through your state office.

Volume 6

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National Congress Bulletin

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EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

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Our National Magazine

AS parents and teachers we desire for our children the finer and happier things in life so that the child's pattern of life may be rich and challenging; so that he may share in those values which are a vital and natural part of our democratic living, and as such lie within the reach of all children and youth. In general, the October issue discusses the true joys and satisfactions that the child may derive through self-expression in art, music, and wholesome play.

Art in the Daily Life of the Child "Give a child crayons and paper and he will not ask questions, he will make drawings." It is no accident that these words should be uttered by Grant Wood, famed American artist, who for years taught art in the public schools. The artist delightfully touches upon his own early experiences. In an entertaining and yet penetrating style he discusses how freedom of expression in art may enrich the child's personality.

The Changed Homemaker Who is "The Changed Homemaker" and what role does she play in providing the child with a greater sense of enjoyment and esthetic appreciation? Is she worker, manager, teacher, or family counselor? Or is she all of these? Dora S. Lewis paints a picture of "The Changed Homemaker," that every person, who believes that family living can become something fine and happy, will want to make his own.

I Play As I Like Parent-teacher readers will find this a simply written article on the significance of the child's play life. From what type of play can the child realize the fullest measure of joy and sense of well-being? Dorothy Koehring asks herself this question and gives her answer. What is yours?

The Child and His Music To those parents, and that means most parents, who want their children to know "something about music," Will Earhart offers his suggestions as to how music instruction should be presented to children so that they may experience the rewards of good music.

Discovering Reality Each one of us, at one time or another, has wished that he might discuss his problems with someone who has both the understanding and training to help him. We may gratify this desire by an interview this month with Dr. John M. Dorsey, who with expert skill and deep insight has aided many parents in solving their problems.

Special Features This issue also contains "As Told by Our National Chairmen," a new feature which is being enthusiastically received. Dr. Thomas W. Gosling contributes the second article on the "Guiding Principles," in which he discusses effective home-school coopera-

tion. The editorial this month was written by Martha Sprague Mason who needs no introduction to parent-teacher readers whom she served so faithfully and well as editor of the Magazine for many years.

Twenty in 1938 There are people who would characterize contemporary youth by flippancy and such a term as "jitterbug." There are others who would say that modern youth gives evidence of unusual seriousness. Who is this youth, born in 1918, who is so difficult to characterize? Frank Kingdon portrays him for us. And Dr. Kingdon knows youth; and he tells what he knows, vividly and truthfully.

Conserving the School Child's Hearing Dr. Horace Newhart claims that the ear has been more neglected than any other part of the human body. Dr. Newhart shares his opinions and clearly thought-out suggestions for the conservation of the school child's hearing with parent-teacher people.

Law and the Family A vital factor in protecting decent and healthy family life which is seldom discussed, is the influence of law on the family. Reverend Robert J. White, Dean of Catholic University of America Law School, presents a challenging discussion of this absorbing problem.

● In addition, there is an article on "Fun at Hallowe'en," prepared by Louise Price Bell, and another, "This Hobby Business" in which Dorothy Jordan gives us glimpses into the trials and tribulations of a mother who tried to be a pal—even when it came to holding still while a grasshopper was being disentangled from her hair.

To Local President:



Now is the time to tell your members about the *National Parent-Teacher*. They are starting the new parent-teacher year eager and enthusiastic, all ready to follow your leadership and to make this the greatest year on record. Help them to retain their eagerness and enthusiasm by interesting them in the *National Parent-Teacher*. It will stimulate their thinking, give them a broader vision of the work, and prepare them to take a more active and effective part in the association activities. Furthermore they will be glad to know that they have a magazine of their own to help them.

Therefore may we suggest:

1. That you discuss with your executive committee the possibility of the association taking four or five subscriptions to be used as "working copies" by officers and chairmen.
2. That you talk with the Magazine chairman and assist her in making plans to contact the membership. No member should be missed! Has she a large enough committee? Has she received the Promotion Packet? Your able cooperation and friendly interest will mean much to her for she, too, is anxious to make your administration a success by functioning efficiently.

Parents and teachers will work together more intelligently and effectively if they read the *National Parent-Teacher* regularly, and now is the time to bring it definitely to their attention! The subscription rate is \$1 a year for 10 issues. There are no discounts or club offers.

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